



Jay School Committee Report

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NWEA:

These computer adaptive tests (which replace the Terra Nova) were administered virtually without a hitch this month, though not without significant effort, in particular by Randy Easter and Carol Reed, with Norman Brackley-Burnham and Scott MacCallum assisting. Both principals had a role, and Donna Labbe was on our team as well. This testing is easier and more fruitful for teachers and students. Teachers will be able to use the reports diagnostically in a way that other tests don't allow, because the reports are timely, and focused on specific standards. Grades 2-8 were tested and preliminary reports are already available. On June 17,18, teachers will be given a full day training by NWEA staff on how to analyze and interpret the data from the tests to adjust instruction. NWEA tests will be given twice a year in the fall and spring, plus additional diagnostics for select students at other times. Students are tested in reading/language arts and mathematics. The ongoing costs are comparable to the Terra Nova.



Consolidation Meeting with SAD36

On Thursday, May 15, our administrative team met jointly with administrators from SAD#36, and discussed a variety of topics. On matters of curriculum, we talked about our mathematics program, their use of *Compass Learning* (computer based) at elementary, and a number of other programs. This was an introductory meeting, so we did not plan strategy, even though a plan will technically be required in less than a year's time. Barriers were still a key theme. It remained clear, however, that services could be improved in both the curriculum and technology cost centers if we became one entity, however difficult that might prove to be.

R.U.S. Grant (distance learning initiative)

Both the elementary and middle schools have made significant use of the teleconferencing equipment this year. Please see the [wiki](#) (shared development web page) for descriptions and informal reports of these: <http://jay-instructional-technology.wikispaces.com/Video-conferencing>. I wish you could have been there to see the *America Challenge* event held recently with Jay fourth graders and their counterparts around the country. First, each group presented clues, then there was a "research period," where the sound was muted and each local team scrambled for an hour to unravel the clues given by each remote group (enthusiastic, productive group work with just one laptop per table.) The secret was the "authentic"

assessment... no test, no paper, just having to get up and say it in front of their peers around the country in 50 minutes! The use of this technology is in its beginning phases, but has already outstripped the ATM program (which was envisioned as a vehicle for such lessons) in volume. The key to these technologies, I think, is to see distance learning as a broad array of possibilities (events, field trips, meetings, lessons, units, etc.) instead of just courses taught from a distance. Jay has benefited from \$200,000 in this round, and should receive another \$30,000 in the "Dixfield round," for which purchases are just starting.

High School Reform:

Joe Moore, John Robinson and I have had several exchanges relative to the calendar and new steps for next year. The *Western Maine Educational Consortium* is offering a 9th grade literacy cohort, which would occupy the 9th grade teachers in new training, new practices, strategies, follow up, etc. on core skills. Joe Moore would have direct involvement with this, working with Darlene Basset from WMEC. We are planning (pending budget support) to offer the 9th grade team one-one laptops similar to grades 7&8. (This program does not seek additional dollars; it is based on a flat budget for computer hardware.) As to credit for meeting MLR standards (required by Law since 2003,) the state failed again to get legislative support for standards as the benchmark for graduation, so it looks like the drop-dead dates (2010-12) will fall with the current system still in place. Our credits, then, are supposed to *mean* achieving the Learning Results. This has been well articulated at JHS, especially within health/physical education, career preparation, science, mathematics, and the visual arts. We still have work to do in achieving rigor in all sections, and filling in the missing pieces (one should be able to get an art credit in dance, for instance, as well as visual art and/or music.)

2007 Learning Results

I've enclosed check sheets which show a thread in science that has articulated the process of technological design in a new way. We have many units (robotics, balloon driven cars, etc.) that get at part of it, but it will need to be assessed for all students. Mt. Blue and Foster have asked us to consider a pre-engineering program with high rigor on technological design, and we have tentatively agreed to enter planning with the *Maine Math and Science Alliance* on incorporating the new technological design standards into the regular science curriculum for grades Pre-K-12. This is a significant

federal/state grant effort. The new *Learning Results* are also the focus of a partnership grant effort with Western Maine Educational Consortium. This project would also bring schools together to focus on the new 2007 content strands in science and mathematics. Jay is a team member in both projects.

Technology Literacy

This is a complex topic, because the “new literacies” involved in the use of information and communication technologies are many and overlapping. This year, we will be proposing benchmarks for all grade levels, based on a subset of critical technology skills. Here’s an example from grade 7:

- _____ “Using only a list of search engine results, (URL, notes, prefixes, etc.) students form inferences about a Web site’s topic, purpose, creator, and audience.”

By adding this to the “short list” for grade 7, we ensure that it is one of the specific criteria for passing for that grade. The current list is very thorough, but only certain items will be flagged for “essential learning,” (necessary to pass that grade level.) These will certainly include *Internet safety*, especially at the middle grades. You are very welcome to participate in the drafting of these standards, which is taking place at Jay wikis: <http://jay-instructional-technology.wikispaces.com/Technology+Literacy>.

Staff Development Calendar for next year:

Many of the threads have been planned for next year for grades K-8. Teachers will work in teams by building devising standards reports for essential learning. The work will be modeled within the “Professional Learning Community” structure for accountability, goals, evaluation, etc. and led by the principals. I will be working on evaluation and of course the products (new report cards, etc.) NWEA training will also continue, offered by the WMEC as a subcontract of *North West Evaluation Association*. The high school early releases are to be scheduled in planning with the staff leadership team and Joe Moore. I will be working to ensure that JHS staff are very aware of the teleconferencing opportunities, particularly with Global Nomads (a group that travels the globe and offers live interactions with students in spots like Darfur, etc.) They will also receive training opportunities in technology integration through the state-supplied Ibooks. This includes a couple of specific tools (NoteShare and StudyWiz,) provided by the state to facilitate teacher-student and teacher-teacher interaction.

NO Child Left Behind



I always make sure our plans are posted for public viewing on the “federal programs” section of the Jay School Department web site. You are entitled to comment and assist in how we spend these precious federal dollars. With the reductions in available funds this year, the Title 1A program (About \$250,000) was unable to maintain staffing levels. It is hoped we will have the same number of persons, though, with one Ed. Tech coming in to replace a teacher that has been reduced. This issue affects all schools, particularly in the Northeast where Title 1A federal dollars are shrinking due to changes in demographics, and how poverty is calculated. We have gotten very accustomed to a robust contingent of professional reading staff through these federal funds over the years, and it’s a struggle to keep it when the funds aren’t sufficient. Title IIA (about \$50,000) is mostly used for a teacher under the “class size reduction” plan, but remaining funds (normally for attraction/retention of “highly qualified” teachers) are transferred to Title 1A to keep the staff. Title IID is a technology grant that keeps getting smaller (last year about \$3,000,) but is greatly appreciated because it allows equipment/computers and teacher training. Planned by the technology committee, it has helped with projectors, cameras, screens, training & conferences, etc.) Title IV, Safe and Drug Free Schools (about \$4,000) will pay for drug counseling. We don’t change this plan much because it’s very, very hard to get any plan approved, and this is one the agency is happy with. Karen Haley does an outstanding job with it. Title V (innovative programs) has been discontinued at the federal level this year. It actually still exists, but is funded at \$0. This means we could transfer funds from other titles into it, should we need to conduct activities only Title V allows. The last two years it funded a homework club at the JES. All of these programs have specific projects, and each of the projects has a person or persons who write the applications, set goals, execute the plan, report on the results, reflect, make changes and so on. These reports can be found on the Jay School Department web site under federal programs. Please consider one of these times attending a planning session for NCLB. The next one is Tuesday, June 10th at the elementary school. Your input is very welcome! **JM**

The best staff development is: Learning focused, Collaboratively planned, On-site, job embedded, Long term, Differentiated, Aligned to district goals